A LETTER
FROM A MERCHANT AT LONDON
To his Correſpondent in Amſterdam.

THe preſent ſtate of our affairs makes me call to mind an Italian Epitaph, which I have been told, is in ſome part of Tuſcany, in theſe words: *ſto qui per eſſer meglio.*

They ſay, that he who caus'd it to be inſcrib'd on his tomb was a man of one of the healthieſt conſtitutions in all that countrey, and that being perſuaded by an Emperick, he would be much better by making uſe of his medicines, he was prevail'd with to take them, and by that means paſſing from a vigorous health to a ſpeedy agony, he had the charity to admonish poſterity by this Epitaph, that when men are well, they should keep where they are.

This is eaſily apply'd to what has lately happen'd amongſt ourſelves. Our nation was in the moſt flourishing condition we could deſire, we enjoy'd a full peace with out any apprehenſion that it could be diſturb'd by our Neighbors, our commerce brought us not only the riches of all Europe, but alſo thoſe of the whole Eaſt and weſt, our liberties and properties were in an entire ſecurity, we liu'd uuder a lawful Authority which exceeded not the bounds preſcrib'd by the laws, and tho' the Popish Religion ſerv'd for a pretext to thoſe who hop'd to find their account in the change of the Governement, yet ſuch as were both clearſighted and ſincerely concern'd for the quiet of their countrey laugh'd at thoſe fears which were pretended on the behalf of the Proteſtant Religion; there being a thouſand Proteſtants amongſt us for one Papiſt, and ſo few of this latter ſort amongſt the King's Forces, that how great ſoever his deſire might have been for the advancement of the Religion he profeſs'd, he could not have procur'd it any greater advantage than what the Parliament, and conſequently the whole nation would have conſented to; in a word, we had nothing to deſire but the continuation of the happineſs we enjoy'd, and nothing could have deſtroy'd this but the deſire of greater happineſs than 'tis lawful for ſubjects to expect.

Now we have met with the Emperick, who has ſeduc'd us, and made us take medicines ſo violent that they have deſtroy'd the vigour of our natural conſtitution. we were not able to endure an army tho' of our own nation, and compos'd of none but our own Relations and friends, who could never have been employ'd againſt our ſelves; for which reaſon they are either diſpers'd or tranſported by him, that there might be no obſtacle to his deſigns. 'Tis likewiſe to heal us of all our diſtempers that he has brought over whole armies of French, Danes, and Germans already, that he now diſpatches Count Solmes to the Princes of the Empire for the fetching 15000. men (or more if poſſible) from the ſame countrey, and that he labors to get men from the Suiſſe Cantons, Sweden, and all the countreys of Europe forthe makingſuch a compound as may be able to diſperſe our ill humors: and thoſe ſentiments of liberty ſo oppoſite to the ſpeedy effect of his medicines. 'Tis alſo to prepare us for it by frequent Bleedings that we now hear of nothing but ſuch extraordinary and inſupportable impoſitions, that it is not to be doubted but in a little time, together with the want of commerce, they will (according to what he has projected) weaken the nation to that degree that it will not be in a condition to ſtruggle any more againſt arbitrary Governement, or that any Parliament hereafter will dare to ask him, or thoſe he employes in executing his deſigns, any account of their actions.

I am likewiſe well aſſur'd, that he could not hold from telling ſome of his confidents, that aſſoon as this great number of foreign Troops (which he deſigns rather for the ſubduing us than making war upon our Neighbors) ſhal have depriu'd all the honeſt Gentlemen of all liberty of ſpeaking and acting, he

he will give us to underſtand that he expects a blind obedience to his will, and that ſuch as have had the boldneſs to propoſe the making it High Treaſon to bring in any foreign Forces in to the Kingdom, ſhall ſoon feel the effects of his revenge, and ſerve for a terror to others who might be enclin'd to give the ſame teſtimony of their affection for their countrey, and reſolution in caſe they had any hope of being ſeconded; which poſſibly as yet they may have, there being hitherto vigor and force enough left in the English nation to oppoſe the ſlavery they are threaten'd with and reſcue the common liberty: but this will ſoon be at an end, when the nation is burthen'd with ſo great a body of ſtrangers, which are brought in to it for no other purpoſe than to ſubdue it.

In fine, if we do not take our ſelves quickly out of the hands of this Emperick, it is not to be hop'd that we ſhall long preſerve either our Eſtates, our liberties, or our lives. we may judge alſo, by what he has done at one time againſt the church of england, and next againſt the Presbyterians, that he is reſolved to favor no Religion but what is moſt ſubmiſſive to his will, and that he will omit no means which may help him to gain an arbitrary power over us, and to exterminate thoſe who shal oppoſe it.

This, Sr, is what all the reaſonable men of this Kingdom think concerning the preſent poſture of our Governement, and yet never theleſs we all continue in a lethargie moſt unworthy of ſo brave a nation, and one which has always been ſo jealous of its liberty. However we ought not to deſpair but that ere long ſome Patriots will appear bold enough to encourage the reſt, and that they will be follow'd and ſupported by all thoſe who are enemies to Tyrany and uſurpation. I deſire you to keep ſecret, what I write remaining, &c.